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Former Russian journalist says secret cargo unloaded

Film unmasks the KGB's Irish connexion

By Stewart Tendler and Peter Hennessy

A former Russian journalist claims he was on-board a Soviet trawler when it stopped off the Irish coast at night 10 years ago while a KGB officer unloaded secret cargo to waiting boats.

The crew of the trawler never saw the cargo concealed in a crate, but they believed the KGB man was delivering arms which were received by two Irishmen who came on-board the fishing vessel as it lay hove-to one night in 1971.

The rendezvous is described in a television film on the work of the KGB and other communist spies which is to be shown next week in Canada by CBC. Produced by an independent television company called Norfolk Communications, the film, *The KGB Connections*, may be shown in Britain later this year.

The man who witnessed the trawler incident as Mr Boris Shtern, a Soviet Jew who emigrated to Canada in 1979. During his career as a photo-journalist in Russia he went on a number of assignments with the fishing fleets.

He was on one of these assignments in 1971 when, he says in the film, "at two o'clock at night my ship came near Ireland. Two boats with Irish people came to the ship and the KGB officer on our boat, Misha Boulanger, gave them a big box, we think of arms."

Mr Shtern says that the KGB man was a descendent of one of the French soldiers who invaded Russia with Napoleon. He met two Irishmen who came on board from what looked like schooners to collect the crate. The crew thought the box contained machine guns.

At the time of the trip Mr Shtern was based in the Soviet port of Kaliningrad. He came to the West with his family and after settling in Canada was debriefed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The film also includes an interview with a former member of the Cuban intelligence service DGI. The man defected while in London in 1971. The film does not name him but he is known to be Señor Gerardo Perazo-Amérchazzura, second secretary at the Cuban embassy.

In the film the Cuban, who now lives in the United States, described how he was trained

in Moscow and said: "Even if the work dealt with operations in France, Italy, England and Canada it was ultimately directed against the United States. In the case of a plan of sabotage against an American Embassy the physical layout of the plan had to be known." He claimed that the DGI was controlled by a Soviet KGB general "totally and absolutely" and he outlined his work in London.

One of his jobs was to gather information on the United States Embassy and build up dossiers on the staff so that possible agents might be identified. The Cubans also tried to check the peak hours of diplomatic radio traffic.

Other tasks included building up lists of Britons who might be recruited such as newspapermen.

The Cubans not only concentrated their efforts against American diplomatic posts but were also ordered to watch and work against American corporations.

The programme also re-examines the Alger Hiss case, which polarized American public opinion and became a touchstone for conflicting attitudes towards Communism and the Soviet Union in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

While Mr Hiss, the former senior State Department official accused of spying for the Russians, awaits the result of a case that could finally clear his name, the programme contains an interview with Mrs Hede Massing, a former member of the Communist underground in America, who restates her allegations of Mr Hiss's complicity.

Mrs Massing, who died in New York on March 8, worked for the Comintern in the United States during the 1930s, recruiting and running American citizens willing to spy for Russia.

In her interview, Mrs Massing repeats evidence she gave to the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in December, 1948, during its inquiry into the Hiss case. She testified at the second of Mr

Hiss's trials in 1950 which led to his conviction for perjury, the United States Statute of Limitations having prevented the filing of an espionage charge.

Mr Hiss, contacted this week at his New York home, said: "It did not happen. I had never met her [Hede Massing] until the FBI arranged a confrontation."

He also repeated his denial made at the trial that he had belonged to the "Ware Group", a secret communist cell in Washington in the 1930s, a charge repeated in a second interview contained in the programme by Mr Nathaniel Weyl. Mr Weyl claimed that he met Mr Hiss "30 or 40" times through their joint participation in clandestine meetings of the group.

Mr Hiss, who will be 80 next year, served 44 months in Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary, Pennsylvania. Since his release in 1954, he has sought unceasingly to have his conviction reversed.